Vulnerability of East Coast of Tamil Nadu

679. SHRI S. K. T. RAMACHANDRAN: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state.

(a) whether the Government are aware of the fact that the East Coast of Tamil Nadu has become vulnerable to the Defence of India due to: (i) its long coast, (ii) innumerable fishing boats going into the Sea, (iii) fishermen conniving with the smugglers and terrorists to smuggle weapons and petroleum products out of India, (iv) the sophisticated weapons and Vessels used by the terrorists from the neighbouring Island country, and (v) the inadequate and luke warm steps taken by the erstwhile D.M.K. Government to arrest the inflow of terrorists though its Coasts;

(b) if so, what steps Government have taken to protect and defend the country;

(c) what vigilance steps are in force to arrest and contain the daily insurgency of terrorists through this vulnerable coast into Tamil Nadu; and

(d) whether Government propose to deploy a heavy column of Coastal guards with sophisticated weapons and boats to put an end to the inflow of terrorists and their allied activities?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): (a) to (d) The Government are maintaining a close watch over all developments which have a bearing on national security for taking effective measures to safeguard national security interests at all times. Due attention has also been given by the Govt. to the requirements of the Tamil Nadu Coast.

The Indian Navy and Coast Guard are maintaining intensive surveillance/patrolling in the Palk Bay/Palk Straits. For this purpose, their resources have been augmented and 2 Naval Detachments, one each at Rameshwaram and Nagapattinam, have been set up. A special drive recently launched by the Tamil Nadu Government has resulted in the seizure of sizeable quantities of arms, ammunition etc. and arrest of a number of militants.

Defence spending

680. MISS SAROJ KHAPARDE: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to reduce the present level of defence spending;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) if the answer to part (a) above be in the negative, whether Government are aware that I.M.F. may favour a cut in Military spending as a conditionality in assisting the developing countries as per the news item appearing in the Business Times (Times of India) dated June 27, 1991; and

(d) if so, whether Government propose to review their policy on defence spending in the light thereof?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): (a) to (d) As reflected in the General Budget 1991-92, there is a provision of Rs. 16,350 crores for Defence Services as against an allocation of Rs. 15,750 crores in Reivsed Estimates 1990-91.

Government takes into account all relevant considerations, including effective defence preparedness, while deciding on the allocations for the various sectors.

681. *(Transferred to 2nd August, 1991)*

Modernisation of army in context of Gulf war

682. SHRI SUKOMAL SEN: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Governmnet are taking adequate steps to modernize the Army with the latest developed weapons with the experience of most modern and precise weapons used by the U.S. Government and their allies during the Gulf War; and

(b) whether the Pakistan Government has already acquired such ultramodern and precise weapons as used during the Gulf War?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): (a) Modernisation of the Army is an ongoing exercise. Plans in this regard are periodically reviewed and updated taking into consideration developments in our security environment. The strategic and technological contents of the Gulf war are under analysis, for initiation of appropriate action.

(b) Reliable information is not as yet available to suggest that Pakistan have acquired the ultra modern and precise weapon systems used in the Gulf War.

Setting up of a Research Station in Antarctica by Pakistan

683. SHRI DHULESHWAR MEENA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) what is the reaction of the Antarctica Treaty Nations to the Indian proposal for a legally binding moratorium on mining in Antarctica;

(b) whether it is a fact that Pakistan is also setting up a Research Station in Antarctica;

(c) if so, whether it has the approval of the Antarctica Treaty Nations; and

(d) if so, what steps Government propose to take to ensure that India's research operations and studies in that region are not hampered?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS (SMT. MARGARET ALVA): (a) There has been convergence of consensus on the basic elements of the Indian proposal and the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Parties have agreed to proposal for a 50-year prohibition on mining activities in Antarctica with specific provisions for review after that period.

(b) Yes, Sir. The first Pakistani scientific expedition to Antarctica was launched in December, 1990.

(c) No, Sir. Pakistan despatched its first expedition without making any move to join the Antarctic Treaty of 1959.

(d) Does not arise as India's research operations and studies in the region are not likely to be hampered.

Gallantry awards to Army personnel

684. SHRI PRAKASH YASHWANT AMBEDKAR: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether any gallantry awards were given to army personnel who took part in the Sri Lanka operation under the Indian Peace Keeping Force; and

(b) whether Government have honoured those army personnel who took part in the operation Blue Star in Punjab?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): (a) and (b) Appropriate awards were given to Defence Services personnel, in deserving cases of demonstrated gallantry, in these operations.

Production of ammunition for Swedish 155 MM field gun

685. SHRI SURESH KALMADI: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that large scale production of sophisticated ammunition for the Swedish 155 MM field guns has since been undertaken in the country; and

(b) if so, what would be the extent of reduction of imports of ammunition and saving of the foreign exchange?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Not Applicable.

Multinationals in sports goods industry

686. SHRI VIREN J. SHAH: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news item which appeared in Financial Express, Delhi, dated 4th July, 1991 entitled "Sports Goods Industry—decision to bring in multinationals decried" indicating that the sports goods industry which predominently is of small sector nature employing more than 70,000 workers exporting more than two-third of about Rs. 100 crore annual production is likely to be affected significantly